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ABSTRACT

This speech by the chairman of the Child and Human Development Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee focuses on issues relating to the needs and problems of children and families. Programs under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee include child abuse, child care, domestic violence, aspects of adoption and foster care programs. Hearings held by the Subcommittee over the past two years have documented two significant changes in social structure during the seventies: Large increases in the proportion of mothers who work, and the increasing number of children living in single parent households headed by women. Related to these changes is an increase in the number of children living in poverty-level conditions with inadequate medical care; a lack of resources for pre-natal care; and an increase in the number of unattended or "latch-key" children. In view of these changes, a 60% increase in the need for child care providers has been projected for the next ten years. The prospects for legislative action on the national level dealing with many of these concerns do not look good at present even though evidence to support the need for care is available. Several major pieces of legislation have failed to gain congressional approval. The present attitude against new spending programs, children's lack of political power, and concerns over government interference with families or child-rearing all make the passage of legislative proposals dealing with children difficult. However, it is essential to protect the interests of children in the struggle for scarce public resources, and the government has a legitimate role in assisting families such as it has done in the areas of child welfare and child care legislation. (Author/SS)

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, ILLINOIS
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IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS NATIONAL ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AS CHA!RMAN OF THE CHILD AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

THIS SUBCOMMITTEE SERVES AS THE FOCAL POINT IN THE SENATE FOR ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

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Alan Cranston

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

I AM PLEASED TO SERVE AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO OUR NATION'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT HAS PERMITTED ME TO EXAMINE CLOSELY A NUMBER OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FACING CHILDREN AND AMERICAN FAMILIES.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ITSELF WAS CREATED IN 1971, AS AN OUTGROWTH OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE 1970 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

ORIGINALLY NAMED THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, IT WAS FIRST CHAIRE BY THEN SENATOR WALTER MONDALE.

I SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTE SINCE ITS INCEPTION, AND ASSUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 95TH CONGRESS AT WHICH TIME IT WAS RENAMED THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILD AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, AND ITS JURISDICTION EXPANDED TO COVER SUCH ISSUES AS FAMILY PLANNING AND DOMESTIC VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AS WELL AS THE PROGRAMS AND ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS LEGISLATIVE JURISDICTION OVER A NUMBER OF PROGRAMS RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, SUCH AS CHILD ABUSE, CHILD CARE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ASPECTS OF ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE PROGRAMS.

ADDITIONALLY, IT HAS OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES IN A VARIETY OF OTHER AREA WHICH IMPACT UPON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE SUBCOMMITTEE HELD NINETEEN HEARINGS ON VARIOUS PROGRAMS AND ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, RANGING FROM INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN TO THE TROUBLING PROBLEM OF CHILD-STEALING BETWEEN DIVORCED PARENTS.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE MAINTAINS ACTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SUBCOMMITTEES AND COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE IN AREAS RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AND DURING THE 95TH CONGRESS, WE HELD JOINT HEARINGS WITH THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT EDUCATION -- WHICH HAS PARALLEL JURISDICTION IN A NUMBER OF AREAS -- ON THE PLANNING FOR THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES.

THESE JOINT HEARINGS PROVIDED ME WITH A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR FROM A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH AMERICAN FAMILIES AND THEIR NEEDS.

THESE JOINT HEARINGS, AND OTHERS WHICH I HAVE CHAIRED OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, HAVE DOCUMENTED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS THE PROFOUND CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES WHICH HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT AND NUMEROUS IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN.

TWO OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, WHOSE PACE HAS ACCELERATED DURING THE 70'S, HAVE BEEN, FIRST, LARGE INCREASES IN THE PROPORTION OF MOTHERS WHO WORK, BOTH FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME, AND SECOND, THE GROWING NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY WOMEN.

THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY, HEADED BY A MALE BREADWINNER AND A FULL-TIME MOTHER, SIMPLY DOES NOT REPRESENT A MAJORITY OF AMERICAN FAMILIES TODAY.

IN MARCH OF 1978, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REPORTED THAT 53% OF THE MOTHERS OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN WERE IN THE WORKFORCE.

THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT THE NUMBER OF WORKING MOTHERS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

IN MY OWN STATE OF CALIFORNIA, IT IS PROJECTED THAT IN FIVE YEARS, 52.4 PERCENT OF THE MOTHERS OF CHILDREN UNDER 6 WILL BE IN THE WORKFORCE, COMPARED TO 40.4 PERCENT IN 1978, AND 61.1 PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 AND 14 WILL HAVE WORKING MOTHERS -- COMPARED TO 53.3 PERCENT IN 1978.

THESE CALIFORNIA PROJECTIONS PARALLEL THOSE FOR THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

IN TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR HEARINGS CONDUCTED BY THE FULL LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE, PRESIDENT CARTER'S ADVISOR ON ISSUES RELATING TO WOMEN, SARAH WEDDINGTON, PROJECTED A 60% INCREASE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS IN THE NEED FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, WITH THE NUMBER OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH WORKING PARENTS RISING FROM 6.8 TO 10 MILLION CHILDREN BY THE END OF THE NEXT DECADE.

THIS INCREASE, INCIDENTALLY, IS PROJECTED DESPITE THE ANTICIPATED OVER-ALL CONTINUATION OF A DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE.

AT THE SAME TIME THAT MORE AND MORE MOTHERS ARE ENTERING THE WORKFORCE, THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DIVORCE.

IN 1970, 85% OF THE CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY LIVED WITH BOTH PARENTS.

BY 1976, THAT FIGURE HAD DROPPED TO 80%.

IN 1975, ONE IN SEVEN CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THREE IN THIS COUNTRY LIVED WITH ONLY ONE PARENT, AND MORE THAN ONE IN EVERY SIX CHILDREN UNDER 18 WAS LIVING IN A SINGLE PARENT-FAMILY, A PERCENTAGE ALMOST DOUBLE THAT IN 1950.

IN CALIFORNIA, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT BY 1984 -- WITHIN A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD -- ONE-FOURTH OF ALL CHILDREN WILL BE LIVING IN SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS.

THESE TRENDS, INCIDENTALLY, HAVE DRAMATICALLY INCREASED IN THE PAST FEW YEARS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN RESIDING IN FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS ROSE 20-25% -- FROM 7.8 TO 9.4 MILLION -- IN THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BETWEEN 1971 AND 1976.

NOT ONLY DO THESE STATISTICS INDICATE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN WHICH CHILD-REARING TAKES PLACE, BUT THE ECONOMICS UNDERLYING THESE FIGURES HAVE PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF MANY CHILDREN.

THE INCOME LEVELS FOR FAMILIES WITH A WHITE, MALE HEAD IS THREE TIME THAT OF FAMILIES HEADED BY BLACK FEMALES, AND DOUBLE THAT HEADED BY WHITE FEMALES.

WITH INCREASING NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LIVING IN SINGLE PARENT, FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY APPROACHES DOUBLE THAT OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ALMOST 21 MILLION PERSONS OR 10.9 % OF THE NATION'S POPULATIO LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

BUT 17 % OF CHILDREN OF ALL RACES IN TH COUNTRY LIVE IN POVERTY, WITH 41 % OF BLAC CHILDREN, AND 33 % OF CHICANO CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY.

7.1 % OF THE FAMILIES HEADED BY MALES LIVE IN POVERTY AND A STAGGERING 37.4 % OF THE FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES LIVE IN POVERTY.

OF THE 3.2 MILLION CHILDREN LIVING IN FAMILIES WITH INCOMES OF LESS THAN $5,000, 60 LIVE IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES.

THE EFFECTS UPON CHILDREN OF LIVING IN POVERTY CAN BE MULTIPLE AND LONG-LASTING.

FOR SOME FAMILIES, THE PROBLEMS OF POVER ARE SELF-PERPETUATING AND BECOME CHRONIC, INTERGENERATIONAL TRAGEDIES.

FOR EXAMPLE, POOR NUTRITION AND LACK OF NECESSARY MEDICAL CARE MAY WELL RESULT IN LACK OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND LOW INCOME FOR THE CHILD AS AN ADULT.

THUS, AS AN ADULT AND PARENT, THIS PERSON'S CHANCES OF HAVING A CHILD AFFLICTED BY THE SAME PROBLEMS ARE GREATLY INCREASED.

AND SO THE CYCLE RUNS.

THE LACK OF ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST DAMAGING ASPECTS OF LIVING IN POVERTY.

IT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED THAT 20 MILLION CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY LACK ADEQUATE ACCESS TO PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE, COMPLETE IMMUNIZATIONS, AND PROMPT AND EARLY TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

IN MANY CASES, ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE CAN AVERT SUBSEQUENT MORE COSTLY AND LONG-TERM IMPAIRMENTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, ONCE COMMON DISEASES SUCH AS POLIO, MEASLES, MUMPS, AND DIPHTHERIA NEED NO LONGER BE THE CRIPPLERS AND KILLERS OF CHILDREN THAT THEY ONCE WERE.

YET, THERE IS GROWING CONCERN THAT SOME OF THESE DISEASES MAY BE RETURNING IN MAJOR EPIDEMICS BECAUSE OF FALLING IMMUNIZATION RATES AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE TWO YEARS AGO RELEASED DATA INDICATING THAT AMONG MEDICAID-ELIGIBLE CHILDREN OVER 3 MILLION WERE IN NEED OF IMMUNIZATION AGAINST DISEASE.

IN ADDITION TO IMMUNIZATIONS AGAINST DISEASE, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER SPECIFIC HEALTH CONDITIONS WHERE THE EFFECTS OF LACK OF ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE CAN BE DOCUMENTED.

FOR EXAMPLE, MEDICAL EXPERTS AGREE THAT IF STREP THROAT IS DETECTED AND ADEQUATELY TREATED, RHEUMATIC FEVER AND CHRONIC RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WOULD BE ALMOST NON-EXISTENT.

YET, IN A RECENT YEAR, APPROXIMATELY 68,000 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 17 SUFFERED FROM THESE TWO CONDITIONS.

IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, WHERE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE MOST UNDERSERVED AREAS OF THE CITY, THE INCIDENCE OF RHEUMATIC FEVER WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY 60 PERCENT AMONG CHILDREN IN THE AREAS SERVED.

WE KNOW THAT THESE MEDICAL CONDITIONS CAN BE PREVENTED, YET THOUSANDS OF POOR CHILDREN CONTINUE TO SUFFER THE LONG-LASTING EFFECTS OF THESE LARGELY AVOIDABLE HEALTH PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF LACK OF APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CARE.

ANOTHER AREA OF INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE IMPACTING HEAVILY UPON POOR CHILDREN INVOLVES PRE-NATAL CARE.

MOTHERS WHO HAVE HAD NO PRE-NATAL CARE ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO GIVE BIRTH TO INFANTS WITH LOW BIRTH WEIGHTS, A CONDITION WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ALMOST HALF OF ALL INFANT DEATHS AND SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASES LIKELIHOOD OF BIRTH DEFECTS AND MENTAL RETARDATION.

YET, A LARGE NUMBER OF STATES CONTINUE TO DENY MEDICAID COVERAGE TO WOMEN PREGNANT WITH THEIR FIRST CHILD AND THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO HAVE A HIGHER INFANT MORTALITY RATE THAN 12 OTHER DEVELOPED NATIONS.

AS DISMAYING AS OUR INFANT MORTALITY STATISTICS MAY BE FOR THE NATION AS A WHOLE, THERE ARE EVEN MORE DISMAYING DISPARITIES AMONG DIFFERENT POPULATIONS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE FOR NON-WHITES IS MORE THAN 1.5 TIMES GREATER THAN FOR WHITES, THE MATERNAL DEATH RATE IS 3.5 TIMES GREATER AND THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THE RATIOS ARE MORE DISPERATE.

IN FACT, BABIES OF NON-WHITE MOTHERS ARE DYING TODAY AT RATES EXCEEDING THOSE FOR BABIES OF WHITE MOTHERS 25 AND 30 YEARS AGO.

THE STATISTICS DOCUMENT THE FACT THAT EVERY YEAR INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN RESULTS IN THE UNNECESSARY DEATHS OF THOUSANDS OF INFANTS AND CONDEMS MANY MORE THOUSANDS TO DISABLING CONDITIONS WHICH RESULT IN ENORMOUS SOCIAL COSTS AND EXPENDITURES OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR REMEDIAL SERVICES.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER AREAS WHERE I COULD RECITE AT LENGTH THE STATISTICS WHICH DEMONSTRATE THE LACK OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES OR GROWING SOCIAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING CHILDREN.

FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE TWO MILLION CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 AND 14 WHO ARE LEFT ALONE TO CARE FOR THEMSELVES AFTER SCHOOL WHILE THEIR PARENTS WORK.

THERE ARE ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS BUREAU SOME 20,000 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX, WHO ARE LEFT ALONE WITHOUT ANY CARE.

A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS SUGGEST THAT THESE FIGURES REPRESENT ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG SINCE MOST PARENTS DON'T LIKE TO ADMIT THEY LEAVE THEIR CHILDREN ALONE.

MOREOVER, THESE FIGURES DO NOT REVEAL, BY THEMSELVES, ALL OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNATTENDED CHILDREN.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE DETROIT FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORTS THAT ONE-SIXTH OF ALL FIRES THEY RESPOND TO INVOLVE A CHILD ALONE IN A HOUSEHOLD.

AND SOME INDIVIDUALS BELIEVE THAT THE RISE IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, VANDALISM, AND JUVENILE ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE CAN BE TIED TO THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF "LATCHKEY" CHILDREN LEFT WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME AFTER SCHOOL.

THERE ARE OTHER PROBLEM AREAS, SUCH AS CHILD ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WHERE THE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED ARE ENORMOUS.

IT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED THAT EACH YEAR OVER 1 MILLION CHILDREN ARE VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

AS MANY AS 10,000 CHILDREN ARE SEVERELY BATTERED EACH YEAR, AND BETWEEN 50,000 AND 70,000 CHILDREN ARE SEXUALLY ABUSED.

SOME 2,000 CHILDREN DIE EACH YEAR IN CIRCUMSTANCES SUGGESTIVE OF CHILD ABUSE.

HEARINGS WHICH OUR SUBCOMMITTEE CONDUCTED LAST YEAR ON THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INDICATED THAT FREQUENTLY CHILD ABUSE AND SPOUSE ABUSE OCCUR WITHIN THE SAME FAMILY.

THE NUMBER OF WIVES SUFFERING EXTREME VIOLENCE FROM THEIR SPOUSE AT SOME TIME IN THEIR MARRIAGE MAY BE AS GREAT AS 5 MILLION, WITH SOME BEING BATTERED REGULARLY.

FINALLY, ANOTHER AREA OF GREAT CONCERN INVOLVES CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT LIVING WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 500,000 CHILDREN LIVING IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES AND ANOTHER 500,000 CHILDREN RESIDING IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.

FOSTER CARE, ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY CARE FOR CHILDREN, TOO OFTEN HAS BECOME A SORT OF LIMBO CHILDREN ENTER FOR YEARS ON END.

FOR SOME CHILDREN, IT BECOMES A PERMANENT PURGATORY.

OVER HALF THE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE TODAY HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS AND ABOUT 100,000 HAVE SPENT MORE THAN SIX YEARS OF THEIR LIVES IN FOSTER CARE.

NEARLY ONE-FOURTH OF THESE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN IN THREE OR MORE FOSTER FAMILY HOMES, AND NEARLY HALF OF THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPENT TWO OR MORE YEARS IN FOSTER CARE HAVE HAD AT LEAST FOUR DIFFERENT CASEWORKERS.

WHILE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS POUR MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO MAINTAINING CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE, LITTLE MEANINGFUL EFFORTS OR DOLLARS HAVE GONE INTO SERVICES DESIGNED TO PREVENT FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS OR REUNIFY FAMILIES, OR, WHERE NECESSARY, FIND ADOPTIVE HOMES FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT RETURN TO THEIR ORIGINAL FAMILIES.

YET, WE KNOW THAT THESE SERVICES CAN PREVENT UNNECESSARY AND PROLONGED FOSTER CARE.

AN H.E.W. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE DRAMATICALLY REDUCED BOTH THE NUMBER OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AND THE TIME IN PLACEMENT.

THIS PROJECT ACHIEVED A 51% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN REMOVED FROM HOMES, AN 85% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS, A 100-PERCENT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 6 PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS, AN 88 PERCENT REDUCTION IN THE RECIDIVISM RATE FOR NEGLECT AND DEPENDENCY, AND FINALLY, A REDUCTION IN THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN LONG-TERM CARE -- MORE THAN 2 YEARS -- FROM 94 PERCENT TO ONLY 34 PERCENT.

THE NET SAVINGS IN DOLLARS UNDER THE NASHVILLE PROGRAM WAS $68,000.

THE NET SAVINGS IN TERMS OF CHILD HEALTH AND WELFARE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE.

SIMILAR RESULTS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED IN OTHER PROGRAMS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

A CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE PROGRAM IN NEW YORK CITY -- THE NEW YORK STATE PREVENTIVE SERVICES DEMONSTRATION PROJECT -- SHOWED THAT FOR AN INVESTMENT OF $500,000, SERVICES SAVED AN ESTIMATED $2 MILLION IN 1 YEAR.

THESE KINDS OF PROGRAMS DO WORK.

THEY HELP KEEP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TOGETHER AND THEY SAVE THE TAXPAYER MONEY OVER BOTH THE LONG-RUN AND THE SHORT-RUN.

INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR CHILDREN PRESENTS DIFFERENT AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE TROUBLING PROBLEMS FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

MY SUBCOMMITTEE, WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEGUN A PROBE OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CHILDREN ARE CONFINED IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE, HAS HEARD HOURS OF TESTIMONY OF TRULY SHOCKING CONDITIONS IN SOME INSTITUTIONS HOUSING CHILDREN.

WE HAVE HEARD OF INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH CHILDREN ARE TIED TO CHAIRS, HANGED BY THEIR ARMS AND LEGS, PUNISHED WITH ELECTRIC CATTLE PRODS, AND GENERALLY SUBJECTED TO SEVERE ABUSE AND BRUTALITY.

THIS PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO REPRESENTATIVES TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, IS SERIOUS AND WIDESPREAD.

THE PROBLEMS FACING CHILDREN AND AMERICAN FAMILIES DURING THIS TIME OF ACCELERATING CHANGE IN OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND SEVERE, CONTINUING ECONOMIC PRESSURE ARE MANY AND SIGNIFICANT, AND I HAVE ONLY TOUCHED UPON A FEW OF THESE AREAS.

WHAT RESPONSES CAN BE ANTICIPATED ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL TO THESE AREA OF CONCERN.

FIRST OF ALL, THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE CONTINUED EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEMS FACING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AND CONTINUED EFFORTS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE ISSUES.

BOTH THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD AND THE PROPOSED WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL ON NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND THE VARIOUS FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR WELL-BEING.

HOWEVER, WHILE THESE KINDS OF ACTIVITIES ARE VALUABLE IN PROVIDING A STIMULUS TO LOOK AT TROUBLING AREAS, CONTINUED EXAMINATION AND RECITATION OF THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR MEANINGFUL RESPONSES TO PRESSING PROBLEMS THAT AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THIS COUNTRY.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROSPECTS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL DEALING WITH THE PRESSING NEEDS OF CERTAIN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DO NOT LOOK PARTICULARLY BRIGHT AT THE PRESENT TIME.

DURING THE LAST CONGRESS, SEVERAL MAJOR PIECES OF LEGISLATION -- SOME OF WHICH WERE SOUGHT BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION -- FAILED TO GAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

FOR EXAMPLE, -- A MAJOR CHILD HEALTH BILL - THE CHILD HEALTH ASSESSMENT ACT -- WAS CONSIDERED BY CONGRESS, BUT NOT ENACTED.

-- A MAJOR REFORM OF THE FOSTER CARE AND CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM - THE CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENTS OF 1977 -- WAS CONSIDERED BY CONGRESS AND NOT ENACTED.

-- LEGISLATION TO EXTEND PRE-NATAL MEDICAID COVERAGE TO LOW-INCOME PREGNANT WOMEN WAS CONSIDERED BY CONGRESS, BUT NOT ENACTED.

-- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION PASSED THE SENATE, BUT WAS DEFEATED IN THE HOUSE.

ALTHOUGH EACH OF THESE MEASURES WAS A MAJOR PRIORITY FOR ME, WE WERE NOT ABLE TO SECURE SUCH A PRIORITY FROM A MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE.

THERE WERE SOME SUCCESS, HOWEVER, IN THE CONGRESS SUCH AS EXTENDING AND EXPANDING THE EXISTING HEADSTART PROGRAM AND THE CHILD ABUSE PROGRAM, AND PASSAGE OF A SMALL, BUT IMPORTANT NEW ADOPTION REFORM ACT.

THESE SUCCESS, HOWEVER, DO NOT BALANCE THE LOSSES.

EVEN MORE RECENTLY, IT HAS BECOME APPARENT THAT A CHILD CARE PROPOSAL, S.4, WHICH I WORKED ON DEVELOPING OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, WILL NOT RECEIVE FAVORABLE ACTION DURING THIS SESSION OF CONGRESS.

WITH ONLY FOUR CO-SPONSORS IN THE SENATE, ONE-HOUSE SPONSOR, AND THE OPPOSITION OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, IT DOES NOT APPEAR REALISTIC TO EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS LEGISLATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, A VARIETY OF EXPLANATIONS FOR THE LACK OF FAVORABLE ACTION ON EACH OF THESE MEASURES.

THE TREMENDOUS TIME CONSTRAINTS FACING THE SENATE DURING THE 95TH CONGRESS DELAYED CONSIDERATION OF THE CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENTS AND THE CHILD HEALTH MEASURE UNTIL THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE SESSION.

THE CHILD CARE BILL AND THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION HAVE SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES IN THAT THEY ARE BOTH NEW SOCIAL PROGRAMS BEING CONSIDERED AT A TIME WHEN THE GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICA PUBLIC SEEMS TO BE AGAINST ANY NEW SPENDING PROGRAMS, REGARDLESS OF SOCIAL NEEDS.

YET, I BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE DEEPER AND MORE SERIOUS OBSTACLES CONFRONTING THOSE WHO SEEKS LEGISLATIVE ACTION IN AREAS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

FIRST OF ALL, THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN ARE NOT A MATTER OF HIGH PRIORITY IN MANY SECTORS OF OUR SOCIETY.

DESPITE RHETORICAL FLOURISHES THAT CHILDREN ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE "RESOURCE", THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVELY CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

SECOND, UNLIKE OTHER DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY, SUCH AS ELDERLY OR HANDICAPPED PERSONS, CHILDREN USUALLY CANNOT SPEAK ON THEIR OWN BEHALF.

I MIGHT NOTE AT THIS POINT THAT NEXT WEEK, THE SUBCOMMITTEE WILL BE HOLDING A RATHER UNUSUAL HEARING AT WHICH WE WILL BE HEARING DIRECTLY FROM SOME NINE AND TEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN ON THEIR CONCERNS FOR A BETTER WORLD.

THE FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT CHILDREN, UNABLE TO VOTE, LACK THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE BALLOT-BOX THAT OTHER INTEREST GROUPS HAVE.

CHILDREN MUST RELY UPON ADULTS TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

AT A TIME OF SCARCE RESOURCES ON THE STATE AND LOCAL AS WELL AS NATIONAL LEVEL FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS, CHILDREN'S INTERESTS CAN EASILY BE OVERLOOKED IN THE SOMETIMES FIERCE LOBBYING PROCESS.

BLOCK SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS, SUCH AS TITLE XX, PROMOTE COMPETITION AMONG A VARIETY OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, INCLUDING CHILDREN.

I THINK THAT THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE SUBORDINATE IN THIS KIND OF COMPETITION.

THAT IS WHY I BELIEVE THAT FEDERAL PRIORITIES AND CERTAIN CATEGORICAL APPROACHES ARE ESSENTIAL TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN IN THE STRUGGLES FOR SCARCE PUBLIC RESOURCES.

FINALLY, GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS WHICH SEEK TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS FACING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OFTEN CONFRONT DEEPLY HELD CONCERNS THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY -- CONCERNS I SHARE AS WELL -- THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH FAMILIES OR CHILD-REARING.

EACH LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL DEALING WITH CHILDREN SEEMS TO EVOKE ALMOST INSTINCTIVE RESISTENCE IN CERTAIN SECTORS ON THE GROUNDS THAT ANY GOVERNMENTAL ACTION PERTAINING CHILD-REARING OR FAMILIES CONSTITUTES AN UNWARRANTED AND INAPPROPRIATE INTERVENTION.

CERTAINLY, THERE IS A LEGITIMATE BASIS FOR SOME OF THIS RESISTENCE AND I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT - FEDERAL OR STATE - SHOULD NOT BE IN THE BUSINESS OF REGULATING FAMILY-LIFE OR INTERFERING WITH DECISIONS OF PARENTS.

YET, THERE ARE AREAS WHERE THE GOVERNMENT HAS A LEGITIMATE ROLE TO TRY AND HELP TO ASSIST FAMILIES IN NEED, AND WHERE THE GOVERNMENT CAN PROVIDE SERVICES TO HELP THESE FAMILIES STAY TOGETHER AND SURVIVE.

THE CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATION AND THE CHILD CARE LEGISLATION ARE TWO EXAMPLES OF AREAS WHERE GOVERNMENT ACTION CAN VERY APPROPRIATELY HELP FAMILIES IN NEED OF SERVICES TO STREGTHEN THEIR FUNCTIONING.

IN THE HEARINGS WE CONDUCTED ON CHILD CARE, WE HEARD WITNESS AFTER WITNESS DESCRIBING THE NEED FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE CHILD CARE AREA SO THAT PARENTS COULD EARN ADEQUATE INCOMES TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES AND KEEP THEM TOGETHER.

WE HEARD TESTIMONY OF FAMILIES ACTUALLY BEING BROKEN APART BECAUSE OF LACK OF ADEQUATE CHILD CARE RESOURCES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

SIMILARLY, THE CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENTS WHICH FAILED DURING THE LAST CONGRESS, WHICH I HAVE RECENTLY RE-INTRODUCED ON BEHALF OF THE ADMINISTRATION, ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO FAMILIES IN DISTRESS IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR HOMES AND PLACEMENT IN FOSTER CARE.

THESE AMENDMENTS ARE ALSO AIMED AT REUNIFYING CHILDREN ALREADY IN FOSTER CARE WITH THEIR FAMILIES, AND PROVIDING, FOR THOSE CHILDREN WHO CANNOT BE RETURNED HOME, SERVICES WHICH CAN END THEIR LIMBO AND LEAD TO THEIR ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT IN NEW SECURE AND LOVING FAMILIES.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STATES CONTINUE TOPOUR MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO A FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN WHICH CHILDREN ARE FORCED TO LANGUISH FOR YEARS, DRIFTING FROM HOME TO HOME, INSTITUTION TO INSTITUTION, WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF PERMANENCY OR ATTACHMENT.

YET, SERVICES SUCH AS CRISIS INTERVENTION, HOME-MAKERS, AND EMERGENCY CARETAKERS, CAN, WHERE MADE AVAILABLE, AVOID THE BREAK-UP OF THE FAMILY AND THE NEED TO REMOVE THE CHILD FROM HIS OR HER HOME.

THE AVAILABLE DATA CLEARLY INDICATES THAT INVESTMENTS IN CHILD CARE, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, AND CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS, NOT ONLY REAP NUMEROUS SOCIAL BENEFITS, BUT ARE COST-EFFECTIVE AS WELL.

AS I INDICATED EARLIER, DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS IN THE CHILD WELFARE AREA WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY FOSTER CARE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO DISTRESSED FAMILIES HAVE RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS TO THE TAXPAYER IN DIRECT, AS WELL AS INDIRECT, LONG-TERM COSTS.

SIMILAR DATA IS AVAILABLE WITH RESPECT TO CHILD CARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

A VERY RECENT REPORT BY THE UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, WHICH PROVIDES CONGRESS WITH FISCAL, BUDGETARY, AND PROGRAM RELATED INFORMATION, CONFIRMS THE MANY BENEFITS THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS CAN PROVIDE TO OUR SOCIETY.

NOT ONLY DOES THE REPORT SHOW THAT THESE PROGRAMS ARE NEEDED, BUT IT MAKES A STRONG CASE FOR THEIR ABILITY TO REDUCE RESULTANT HEALTH, SOCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY YOUNG CHILDREN -- PROBLEMS WHICH BY ALL ACCOUNTS ARE EXPENSIVE, DIFFICULT, AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERCOME IN LATER YEARS.

THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE CONCLUDED THAT THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES PROVIDED BY THESE PROGRAMS MAY HAVE LONG RANGE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR GENERATIONS OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES WITH RESULTING VERY SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

THE G.A.O. HAS CONCLUDED THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS VERY OFTEN RESULT IN:

-- A REDUCED NEED FOR SPENDING ON REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO OVERCOME EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH DEFICITS, AND

-- A REDUCTION IN DEPENDENCY ON THE PUBLIC WELFARE SYSTEM AS CHILDREN WHO PARTICIPATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS EXPERIENCE SUCCESS AND THEIR FAMILIES ESTABLISH GREATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

THE REPORT ALSO TRACES THE DOCUMENTED LINKAGES BETWEEN POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RELATED TO UNDIAGNOSED LEARNING DISABILITIES AND FUTURE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR AND RELIANCE ON THE WELFARE SYSTEM.

STUDIES ARE CITED SHOWING THAT IF A PERSON PERFORMS POORLY IN SCHOOL HE OR SHE IS MORE LIKELY TO END UP IN PRISON OR ON WELFARE.

LONG-TERM FOLLOW UP ON CHILDREN WHO PARTICIPATED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS HAS DOCUMENTED THE LASTING POSITIVE EFFECTS PARTICIPATION IN THESE PROGRAMS HAVE ON SUBSEQUENT EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

THE GAO. REPORT ALSO FOUND THAT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS CHILD ABUSE.

IN SHORT, THE GAO.'S INVESTIGATION DOCUMENTS THE FACT THAT CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE COST EFFECTIVE SOCIAL PROGRAMS FROM WHICH OUR SOCIETY CAN REAP LONG-TERM FISCAL AS WELL AS HUMAN SAVINGS.

DESPITE THE DEMONSTRATED COST EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE PROGRAMS, THE GAO. REPORT CONCLUDES THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY REACHING ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE 3.7 MILLION CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 6 WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS HIGH RISK IN TERMS OF THEIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AND FULL DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR NEED FOR THESE PREVENTIVE AND CORRECTIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENACT MEASURES SUCH AS THE CHILD WELFARE, THE CHILD HEALTH, AND THE CHILD CARE LEGISLATION?

FIRST, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED A BROADER BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THESE MEASURES.

THE HANDFUL OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCATES LOBBYING ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS SIMPLY CANNOT BY THEMSELVES OVERCOME THE TYPE OF OBSTACLES WHICH CONFRONT LEGISLATIVE ACTION IN THESE AREAS.

OTHER SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS NEED TO BE CONVINCED OF THE HIGH PRIORITY THAT SHOULD ATTACH TO THESE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES.

SECOND, THERE NEEDS TO BE A MAJOR EFFORT TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS WELL AS VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS, ON THESE PROBLEMS.

ONE OF THE WITNESSES AT OUR HEARINGS ON INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE MADE THE STATEMENT THAT IF THE GENERAL PUBLIC REALLY KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE, THEY WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE ABUSE AND BRUTALITY WHICH EXISTS.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES ARE NEEDED TO SHOW THE TREMENDOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONTINUING A FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN WHICH CHILDREN ARE MAINTAINED FOR YEARS IN TEMPORARY CARE WHEN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES WOULD PERMIT THESE CHILDREN TO BE WITH THEIR OWN FAMILIES.

THERE NEEDS TO BE A MAJOR EDUCATIONAL EFFORT UNDERTAKEN TO SHOW WHAT A CHILD CARE BILL LIKE S.4 WOULD DO FOR LOW-INCOME, WORKING FAMILIES THAT ARE STRUGGLING TO STAY IN THE WORK-FORCE AND OFF WELFARE AND HOW INVESTMENTS IN THIS TYPE OF A PROGRAM WILL REDUCE COSTS IN OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, JUVENILE CRIME AND VANDALISM.

THERE NEEDS TO BE A MAJOR INFORMATION EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HELPING LOW-INCOME WORKING MOTHERS WITH THE COSTS OF CHILD CARE IS NOT INTERFERENCE WITH FAMILY LIFE, BUT A SERVICE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR FAMILIES AND KEEP THEM TOGETHER.

THERE IS CONFUSION IN THE PUBLIC MIND BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF FAMILIES AND GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN FAMILY LIFE. THIS CONFUSION CAN AND SHOULD BE REMOVED BY CONTINUING CLARIFICATIONS BY BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LEADERS.

FINALLY, WE NEED A COMMITMENT TO ACTION.

KENNETH KENISTON, WHO DIRECTED THE CARNEGIE COUNCIL ON CHILDREN, PUT THE ISSUE VERY WELL: "THE CALL FOR MORE REASEARCH" IS A COMMON ACADEMIC REACTION TO CONFLICTS IN THE AREA OF CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY....IN THE END, A BETTER SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN REQUIRES NOT JUST MORE KNOWLEDGE, BUT A COMMITMENT TO CHANGE."